

Fake James Bond Gets 2-Year Term

Tipoff Snaps Charm of Secret Agent 0

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By Arthur Everett
NEW YORK, April 16 (AP) Secret agent extraordinary Tom Romano was everything the fictional James Bond ever was, and then some—until fate stripped him of his attache case and his masquerade. Today he is just plain Thomas Catizone, a Brooklyn truck mechanic, facing two years in Federal prison.

It all began in January, 1962, when Catizone, 35, rugged, 6 feet 2 and 220 pounds, met a brunette divorcee, Laura Darris, 41, who operated a small restaurant near the garage where he worked.

Catizone introduced himself as Tom Romano of the Central Intelligence Agency, leader of a five-man American espionage squad. He came complete with pistol and attache case—the latter stuffed, he said, with treaties he was taking back to

Washington from South Viet-Nam.

Mrs. Darris was no end impressed by Catizone's tales of piloting a spy plane, similar to the U-2 that was shot down over the Soviet Union. She shivered in admiration over Catizone's hair-raising exploits with gun and attache case in Algeria and Cyprus.

On their dates, there never was any dearth of conversation — from Catizone at least. Within two months, their friendship had blossomed to the point where Mrs. Darris gave Catizone \$1000 for the family of a young mechanic who was killed in the explosion of Catizone's plane while preparing it for a secret mission.

In May, 1962, Catizone's tale of a former wife who was threatening to wreck his CIA career led Mrs. Darris to hand over \$2000 for back alimony.

Then, to Mrs. Darris's consternation, tragedy overtook the doughty CIA agent. He telephoned that an auto accident outside Washington had killed a fellow agent and left him paralyzed from the waist down. He, ah, needed—well, this time it cost Mrs. Darris \$1025. The G-note was for the hard-hearted former wife. The \$25 was cigarette money for the crippled Catizone.

Several days later, heralded by the siren of an ambulance, a pitiful sight confronted the divorcee. Into her apartment, two attendants bore Catizone on a stretcher. After a brief visit, with a wan wave of the hand, Catizone was borne supinely away—the whole caper having cost him \$60 to hire the ambulance and attendants. Mrs. Darris never saw agent Tom Romano again.

She did hear from him,

however—in February, 1963, when he telephoned her that he and another agent were the only survivors of seven American frogmen who had undertaken a dangerous underwater mission to Cuba.

In September, 1963, Mrs. Darris received an anonymous telephone call from a woman, who gave her the agent's home phone number. She dialed it and got Mrs. Catizone on the wire—not an ex-wife, but a very present wife.

Before they could get down to really serious woman-to-woman talk, Catizone took the phone and told Mrs. Darris to get lost or he would have her "taken care of."

Disillusioned at last, Mrs. Darris went to the Feds with the whole incredible story. The FBI took over from there. They found out Mrs. Darris was only one of four feminine admirers of agent Tom Romano.

Whenever one of the admirers phoned Catizone at his garage, he would have a coworker race a truck engine. Then he would explain to the caller that he had no time to talk, that the engine of his airplane was being revved up for a quick take-off on a cloak-and-dagger mission.

Today, in Federal Court, after a nonjury trial, Judge Thomas F. Murphy gave Catizone two years in prison for masquerading as a CIA agent. He continued the mechanic free in \$2500 bail for an appeal from evidence that Murphy called "overwhelming."

Truck mechanic Catizone walked out of the courtroom after sentencing, leaving behind him the courageous shade of Secret Agent Extraordinary Tom Romano, greatest fictional gift to the legend of undercover adventure since Ian Fleming invented Agent 007.